Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 03112 282319Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SCI-06 SCEM-02 INT-08 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

DRC-01 /131 W

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R 282259Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2394

UNCLAS OTTAWA 03112

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: ENRG, CA

SUBJECT: IMPACT OF INCREASED OIL PRICES IN CANADA

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS ENERGY MINISTER MACDONALD AT DECEMBER 27 PRESS CONFERENCE SUGGESTED RECENT MIDDLE EAST PRICE

INCREASE WILL WORK OUT AT \$4 PER BARREL FOR OIL LANDED AT

MONTREAL AND THAT THIS WOULD TRANSLATE INTO FURTHER TWELVE CENTS

PER GALLON INCREASE IN RETAIL PRICES GASOLINE AND HEATING OIL.

THIS WOULD REPRESENT A DIFFERENCE OF TWENTY CENTS PER GALLON

BETWEEN PRICES AT MONTREAL AND TORONTO, "AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE

LEVEL TO LIVE WITH." MACDONALD REPORTEDLY SAID GOVERNMENT

IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO SET UP A SUBSIDY PLAN AND FINANCE

IT BY BOOSTING THE EXPORT TAX ON CRUDE OIL TO \$6.50 PER BARREL

ON FEBRUARY 1. HE INDICATED THIS WOULD BE MAJOR QUESTION FOR

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL ENERGY CONFERENCE WHICH WILL CONVENE IN

JANUARY. MACONDONALD ALSO INDICATED GOC HAS NO PLANS TO

END WELL HEAD PRICE FREEZE IN WESTERN CANADA BEFORE END OF

CURRENT HEATING SEASON.

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